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A
R E V I E W
OF
PRESIDENT DAY'S TREATISE
ON THE
W I L L .

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HARTFORD.
PRINTED BY ELIHU GEER,
26½ STATE-STREET.
1838.



R E V I E W .

AN Inquiry respecting the self-determining power of the Will; or contingent volition. By JEREMIAH DAY, President of Yale College. New Haven, Herrick and Noyes, 1838. pp. 200, 12mo.

WE have read this little volume with deep interest, and with a high degree of satisfaction. President Day possesses the rare talent of rendering an abstruse subject remarkably plain. His habits of study, and long experience as a teacher in mathematical and physical science and mental philosophy, added to a mind naturally clear and discriminating, have eminently fitted him for the task he has undertaken. His object is not to propound any new theories on the subject of moral agency. He lays claim to no new discoveries in theological science; nor is he disposed to follow in the track of modern innovators. His views, so far as we can discover, do not differ from those of Edwards; yet he has found ample scope for his peculiar talents, in elucidating and defending the principles for which that illustrious divine contended. The reader, therefore, must not expect to find in the work before us, any new theological views, or philosophical theories; but he will find old and long established principles clearly stated, and their truth conclusively demonstrated. He will find truths which have been obscured by the use of vague and ambiguous terms, brought out to the light of day, and commended to his understanding by a force of evidence which cannot be easily resisted. Many a reader, we cannot doubt, who has been sorely perplexed by recent theological speculations, will find his mind relieved by a perusal of this volume. It is a most timely production; and we cannot but cherish the hope that it will do much towards dispelling the mists which a false philosophy has thrown around some of the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel.

The spirit which pervades the work, is such as we should anticipate from what we know of the candor, mildness, and Christian simplicity of the author. It is free from every thing like acrimony, or bigotry, or dogmatism, or the spirit of party. The manifest design of the writer, is to ascertain the truth, and to exhibit it with plainness, whatever may be its bearing on existing theological controversies.

The style is neat, simple, pure, and remarkably perspicuous.

For precision of thought and language, for accuracy of definition and clear explanation of ambiguous terms, and for lucid argumentation, the work is not surpassed by any metaphysical treatise within our knowledge. While perusing it we were forcibly reminded of a remark which was once made in reference to another production; "It is like the waters of one of our northern lakes, deep and clear — so clear indeed, that a careless observer might think it shallow."

It may perhaps be thought by some, that the theory of a self-determining power of the will, has long since been exploded — that nobody now believes it, and that he who attempts to refute it is only beating the air. Such, however, is not the opinion of President Day. His clear and penetrating mind has traced certain errors of the present day, to their first principles. He has discovered the starting point from which the reasoning of their advocates proceeds; and he has rightly judged, that the most effectual way to destroy these errors, is, to demolish the foundation on which they rest. He says, "the self-determining power of the will is a subject intimately connected with many of the theological discussions of the present day." We are entirely of the same opinion. By this, however, we do not mean, and we presume our author did not mean, that this theory is at the present day openly and professedly maintained. Probably no one who has been engaged in the recent discussions which relate to the moral agency of man, and the moral government of God, would say, in so many words, that "every free act of the will is determined by an antecedent free act;" or that "volitions are contingent events." Yet, unless we greatly mistake, there are those who have advanced and strenuously defended principles, which necessarily involve the theory in one or the other of these forms. At all events, there are those, (as we shall attempt to show before we have done,) who have called in question the great doctrine which it is the object of President Day to defend; viz: *The absolute dominion of God over the moral universe; and his entire control of the thoughts, feelings, and conduct of his accountable creatures.*

His object in writing the treatise, and the reasons which induced him to adopt this particular mode of discussion, will appear from the following remarks in his "Introductory Observations."

"The momentous interest which belongs to this subject, lies in its relation to the *moral government of God*. If nothing from without the will of the agent can have any influence in determining what his volitions shall be, then it must be beyond the power of the Father of our spirits to give direction to the acts of the will, without interfering with the prerogatives of accountable agency." * * * "If the creator has filled this and other worlds with living agents, whose acts of will are entirely independent of himself, he can only look on, and observe the operation of their voluntary powers; accommodating the course of his external providence to what *they* may happen to determine. On this supposition, he can *punish* iniquity, but can do nothing to

prevent it, without impairing the independence of moral agency. He can render a *reward* to virtue, but can take no effectual measures to *promote* it, except by such a determining influence, as is supposed to be inconsistent with the very nature of virtue. He can rule the worlds of *matter*, which roll in harmony and brightness through the heavens, but cannot control the heart of man." * * * "On a subject so momentous, and so difficult to be thoroughly comprehended in all its relations, it might be expected that we should almost instinctively turn to the records of inspired truth for instruction. He who gave to the human soul its being, and all its powers of thought and volition, must surely know, whether any efficacious influence from without is inconsistent with accountable agency. But here we are met by an assumption which precludes a reference to the decision of Scripture. It is claimed that reason, and consciousness, and common sense, have already decided the point; and that God cannot contradict, in his word, what he has distinctly made known to us, by the faculties which he himself has implanted in the soul. Whatever passages, therefore, which *seem* to favor a particular doctrine, may be found in the Scriptures, they are to be so interpreted, as not to signify any thing which reason pronounces to be absurd. We are called upon, then, to inquire, whether the position that nothing but the will itself has any influence in determining what its acts shall be, *is so intuitively or demonstrably certain*, as to preclude all possibility of finding the contrary declared in the word of God. So long as this position is adhered to, it is vain to think of appealing to the authority of the Scriptures, on the question respecting the self-determining power of the will. They will of course be so explained, as to express a meaning in conformity with the principles assumed. This is my apology for making an application of dry metaphysics to a subject so nearly connected with one of the departments of Scriptural theology. Those who are prepared to receive implicitly the divine testimony, just as they find it on the sacred page, may pass over this part of the subject as being unnecessary for them; and proceed to the section in which the evidence from Scripture is presented." pp. 11—14.

It appears from these remarks, that our author regards the subject under discussion, as "nearly connected with one of the departments of Scriptural theology," where the ultimate standard of appeal must be the word of God. By this criterion all our philosophical conclusions must be tested. "*To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.*" President Day has no sympathy with those who exalt reason above revelation; or who explain away the obvious meaning of the Bible, to make it accord with the decisions of their philosophy. Whether God can control, at pleasure, the moral actions of men, is a question which he who created the human soul, and who endued it with all the attributes which it possesses, is certainly better able to decide than a creature of yesterday. And if in the revelation which he has given to man, he has spoken on this subject, it becomes us to receive his testimony with child-like simplicity. That the Bible is explicit on this point, our author fully believes. He considers it indeed so explicit, that "those who are prepared to receive the divine testimony just as they find it on the sacred page," have no need to perplex their minds with metaphysical speculations.

But the objectors to this doctrine contend that it involves absurd-

ities too palpable to be admitted by a rational mind; and consequently that those passages of Scripture which seem to teach it, must not be understood in their most obvious sense, but must be so interpreted as not to contradict the decisions of reason. It becomes necessary therefore, to meet the objector on his own ground, to examine his reasoning and test his conclusions; to inquire whether there is not some error in his philosophy; whether his reasoning is not based on false principles; and whether after all, there is not a perfect agreement between the dictates of sound philosophy, and the plain declarations of the word of God. It was this, which induced Edwards to write his treatise on the will. And this is President Day's apology for engaging in metaphysical discussion in defence of a doctrine of revelation.

We wish the reader to keep constantly in mind the great object of the treatise. It is as we have stated, to vindicate the doctrine of God's absolute dominion over the hearts and conduct of his accountable creatures. It is the relation which the discussion has to this "department of Scriptural theology," which, in the view of our author, gives to it its practical importance, and clothes it with "momentous interest." He says,

"The inquiry, then, concerning contingent self-determination, involves no less a question than this; *whether God can exercise any determining influence over the moral actions of his creatures.* Are we prepared to decide this momentous question in the negative? While the worlds and systems of worlds in the *material* universe are under the perfect control of their Maker, is the *moral* world unavoidably left to the dominion of chance?" pp. 147, 148.

To decide this "momentous question," he repeatedly insists, our only sure and safe course is to resort to the Scriptures; and to them he makes his final appeal. After carrying his readers through a course of clear and forcible argumentation, exposing the absurdities involved in the objections to the doctrine in question, he observes,

"My object has not been to lay a *philosophical* foundation for religious belief; but to prepare the way for simple and confident reliance on the testimony of Scripture. I have not undertaken to prove, by such arguments as must at once carry conviction to every mind, that a controlling influence is exercised over the will, in a way which is consistent with accountable agency. It has been my aim to ascertain, whether the absurdity of the doctrine has been so *demonstrated*, as to preclude all possibility of finding it asserted in the Scriptures." p. 174.

Having thus prepared the way for an appeal to the oracles of God, he brings forward in his closing section, an array of passages which so conclusively establish the point in debate, that their force cannot be evaded, except by explanations which do violence to all legitimate rules of interpretation. He shows that God is said to cause his people to walk in his statutes—to incline their

hearts to obey him — to turn the hearts of men whithersoever he will — to leave men to themselves — to give them over to a reprobate mind — to make them obedient or perverse — to cause them to execute his determinate counsel, and to do what his hand and counsel had before determined to be done — to create in his people a clean heart, and to renew a right spirit within them — to keep them from falling — and to subdue and to harden the hearts of men at his pleasure. He closes his appeal to the scriptures with the following remarks.

“After attentively examining the various passages of Scripture which speak of the purposes and agency of God, in relation to the hearts and actions of men; declaring that he *causes* righteousness to spring forth; that he *inclines* the hearts of his people to obey him; that he *turns* them at his pleasure; that he *makes* them obedient or perverse; that he *directs* their hearts unto the love of God; that *his counsel* determines before, the things to be done by human agency; that he *gives a new heart* and a right spirit; that he *works* in his people *to will and to do*; that he is able to *keep* them from falling, till he presents them faultless before the presence of his glory; and that, on the other hand, he often hardens the heart and makes it obstinate: after weighing well the import of these several expressions, can any one fail to admit, that according to the Scriptures, God has a determining influence over human volitions? Can he escape from this conclusion, on any other ground, than that he has come to the examination, with a preconceived and settled opinion, that such a doctrine cannot be true, and therefore cannot be found in the oracles of God? Are we thus to explain away the explicit declarations of Scripture, till we have brought them to coincide with our own philosophy? Can the advocates of a directing and a determining divine influence, express their opinions in stronger or more definite terms, than those used by the inspired writers?” pp. 193, 194.

We have referred to this part of the treatise in the first place, for the purpose of keeping distinctly before the minds of our readers the great point of “Scriptural theology,” which the author is vindicating against the philosophical objections by which it has been assailed. The question at issue is, whether the moral world is as completely under the control of God as the natural world. Not whether they are controlled in the same manner, and are subject to the same laws. No one supposes that mind is subject to those laws of nature “by which the motions and positions of material objects are regulated.” But mind may have its laws as well as matter, and may be as completely subject to its laws. The connection between cause and effect may be as absolute in the moral, as in the material universe. It was the doctrine of the Westminster divines, and has been the doctrine of Calvinists generally, that “God’s works of providence, are his most holy, wise and powerful, preserving and *governing* all his creatures, and *ALL THEIR ACTIONS*.”

The great objection to this doctrine is, that it is inconsistent with that freedom of the will which is essential to moral agency. This is a philosophical objection, and President Day has fairly met it with a philosophical answer. That man is a free moral

agent is admitted on both sides, and indeed cannot be questioned. The decisions of each one's own conscience, and the whole tenor of the Bible, make this point too plain to admit of doubt for a moment. But what is essential to moral freedom? Does it imply independence of divine control? May not God exercise a determining influence over the volitions of men, and still they be free? This brings us at once to the inquiry respecting the self-determining power of the will. If volitions are dependent on some influence from without the mind, they may be controlled without impairing the freedom of the agent. But if they are not dependent they must be self-determined.

To prepare the way for the discussion of this point, President Day in the first place, defines some of the terms which he has occasion to use, such as cause, effect, contingency and power. "A cause is an antecedent on which something depends." "An effect is a consequent of something on which it depends." "An effect may in many cases be produced not by a single antecedent, but by the combined influence of several. All the circumstances upon which the effect depends may be considered as a complex cause." "Some writers speak of *efficient* causes as a distinct class. But all causes are so far efficient or efficacious that they are antecedents on which, in part at least, effects depend." Contingence is used in two senses. In common discourse it denotes that something has taken place, the immediate cause of which is not known. But philosophers have used it to denote the absolute negation of causation. It is used by President Day "to signify the exclusion of causation or dependence in the case of volition; the denial that there is any thing preceding which determines the act of the will to be what it is. According to this signification, the opposite of contingency is dependence." We obtain our idea of power by observing the relation between cause and effect. "The efficacy of the cause, its being of such a nature as to produce effects, is its power. In other words, *power is that belonging to a cause, upon which the effects depend.*" "In the most extensive use of the word, the power to do any thing includes all the antecedents, the whole aggregate of circumstances upon which the effect depends." "We rarely have occasion, however to speak of power in this absolute sense." "In speaking of human agency we are accustomed to say, that a man has power to do any thing which he does whenever he will."

After some remarks on the powers of the mind, and the different modes of classifying them, he comes to a consideration of the will and its operations.

"There has been no settled agreement with respect to that most important faculty called the will. European writers generally confine the term to the power of *ordering* some bodily or mental act. Volition, according to them, is determining to do something. A man wills to move his hand, or to think

on a particular subject. In such cases, the act which is willed immediately follows the volition. A man determines to speak, and he speaks; he wills to walk, and he walks. We frequently resolve on a *course of conduct*, for the sake of obtaining some distant good. A man determines to devote himself to the acquisition of property, to gaining applause, to sensual gratification, or to a life of benevolent effort. Such a resolution is called a commanding purpose of life, predominant inclination, governing state of the will, dominant preference, generic volition, &c. to distinguish it from those particular acts by which these general determinations are carried into execution. In addition to both these classes of volitions, the New England divines, since the days of Edwards at least, have very commonly considered *emotions* or *affections* as acts of the will. The elder Edwards says, 'I humbly conceive, that the affections of the soul are not properly distinguished from the will; as though they were two faculties in the soul.' 'The affections are no other than the more vigorous and sensible exercises of the inclination and will of the soul.' But although emotions, purposes and executive volitions are, in some respects similar; yet in other respects, they are different. Emotion is directed to an *object*; a purpose fixes on an *end*; an executive volition orders an *act*. Executive acts may depend on a predominant purpose; and the purpose may depend on antecedent emotions. A general purpose may look to some *distant* end; an executive volition relates to something which is *immediately* to follow." pp. 38—40.

From this it will be seen that President Day after the example of Edwards, includes in the acts of the will, all the moral feelings or affections. He rightly judges, however, that emotions, purposes, and executive volitions are not, in all respects, alike, and that they may with great propriety, be arranged into distinct classes. It is important to keep this classification in mind, in order to understand the subsequent discussion.

When we speak of the determination of the will, our inquiry is not whether man is the agent of his own volitions, nor why he wills at all; but why he wills as he does—why he chooses one thing rather than its opposite? What determines him thus to choose?

"Is it a *preceding* act of the will? This is undoubtedly the case in many instances. Taking the will in its most enlarged acceptation, as including not only *executive* acts, but *purposes* and *emotions*, acts of one class may be determined by those of another. A man purposes to go to the post-office; every step he takes on his way, is determined by this purpose. And the purpose may have been determined by some strong emotion; an eager desire, perhaps, to receive intelligence of the recovery of a friend from sickness, or the safe arrival of a richly freighted ship. Farther, the emotions themselves are commonly excited, either by perceptions of external realities, or by the internal imaginings of our own minds. Imperative acts of the will, then, may be preceded by purposes, the purposes by emotions, the emotions by perceptions or the workings of imagination. But all these belong to the mind. They do not reach beyond ourselves." * * "But every step cannot be dependent on another within the mind. For this would involve the absurdity of at least *one step before the first*, or else of an *infinite* series of steps. The first act, then, must proceed from something within the mind which is *not an act*, or from something *without*, or from both together, or from *nothing*." * * "If the first act of the series proceeds from some *mental state*, which is neither an act nor the substance of the mind; that state must have had an origin, either

from without or from something within, which, if we trace back the chain of dependencies, and do not admit contingency, any where, to break the series, will bring us to something without the mind." * * * "If it be said that our mental exercises are dependent on our *propensities*, which are a part of ourselves, still it is to be considered that our propensities are either *acquired*, in consequence of previous states of mind in connection with external circumstances, or are a part of the *original constitution* of the mind, received from its Creator. Or if it be supposed that a man practices iniquity or virtue, because he has formed a sinful or holy *purpose*; or because by his own acts, he has contracted a sinful or virtuous *habit*; yet his *first* sinful or virtuous act on which the others are considered as dependent, did not proceed from a purpose or habit of his." * * * "Some writers speak of the power of willing, as being the sole and sufficient cause why the mind wills one way, rather than another." * * "But an equal power to will *any way indifferently*, is not surely the only ground of willing one way *rather* than another." * * "Liberty to *either* side does not turn the will uniformly to *one* side. Power to the contrary, does not bind the soul in unwavering devotedness to its Maker. An equal chance of doing right and doing wrong, does not secure a course of uniform rectitude. If it be said that there is really *no* cause or reason why the will turns one way rather than the contrary, this brings us to contingent self-determination." pp. 43—48.

"The question, then, for our consideration is, whether the volitions of accountable agents are *contingent* or *dependent*; not whether they are dependent on the mind, objects of choice, &c. for coming into existence merely; but for being *such* volitions as they are, right or wrong, sinful or holy. The *mind* it is admitted, puts forth volitions, but does it determine of what sort they shall be? Does any thing *else* determine this? Does any thing else make any *difference* in the volitions? Or is it a mere matter of accident, that they are as they are? If they are not dependent they must be contingent, in the absolute sense in which we are now using the term. If they are not contingent they must be dependent." * * * "If the kind of volitions which a man puts forth, is to be ascribed to accident, in what part of the series of mental acts, does this prolific contingency, this wonder-working nonentity, 'this effectual no-cause,' do its work? When does it break the connection between volition and all preceding influence? Are *executive* acts of the will independent of purposes, and emotions, and appetites? Does the tippler resort to the dram-shop without any inducement? Or if at any time he denies himself his accustomed indulgence, has he no motive for his abstinence?" * * * "Is the forming of *purposes*, the place where the dependence upon preceding influence is broken off? When a man resolves to devote his powers and labors to the calls of ambition, is it done independently of any love of distinction? When the Christian abandons his former pursuits, and forms a purpose of devoting himself to the service of God, does he do it without a *reason*; a reason of sufficient efficacy to control his decision? Do men form resolutions for the sake of obtaining those objects to which they are perfectly *indifferent*? If it be admitted, that our imperative volitions are influenced by our purposes, and our purposes by our desires and appetites, shall we find in the *latter* the independence which contingent self-determination implies? When objects are brought before our minds, is it altogether a matter of accident, whether we shall be pleased with them or not? Is it as easy to be gratified with contemptuous treatment as with applause? Is it an even chance, whether a miser will be most pleased with a guinea or a sixpence?" pp. 49—52.

"But it may be asked, does not a man *originate* his own volitions? They undoubtedly *begin* with him in this sense, that they have no existence till he puts them forth. But does this imply that dependence in the case, can be traced no further back than to the agent?" * * * "If it be said that the *nature* of his volitions depends on nothing but the nature of the man; yet, it

is to be considered, that this nature of his must have had an origin from some cause. Or if there be a *state* of the mind, which is different from its nature and its operations, and which is the cause of its volitions, that state is not the product of chance." p. 53.

"Is man the *efficient* cause of his own volitions? There surely can be no reasonable doubt on this point, if by efficient cause, be meant the agent who wills." * * * "But if we apply the term efficient cause to *every thing*, which is in any way concerned in determining what a man's volitions shall be, we cannot say that he is the only efficient cause of them." p. 54.

That volitions are not contingent but dependent, our author proceeds to show, from the influence of motives. He defines a motive to be "that which moves, inclines, induces or influences the mind to will, or which has a tendency thus to move it." Motives are of two kinds, external and internal. An external motive, is some object contemplated by the mind, which has a tendency to move the will. An internal motive, is some feeling or desire of the mind, which is awakened by an object of contemplation, and which prompts the purposes and executive acts of the will.

"The motive to an imperative act, may be a wish to execute some previous purpose. The motive to a purpose, is the desire to obtain some object which is viewed as eligible. That which immediately excites the volition in this case, is an affection of the mind, an emotion, an *internal* motive. But that which excites the emotion itself, may be an object *without* the mind, an *external* motive. A tree loaded with fair and delicious fruit, excites desire in the beholder. This desire may move him to pluck the fruit. The fruit itself is an external motive. The desire which stimulates to the act of gathering it, is an internal motive. One act of the will, therefore, in the more enlarged acceptation of the term will, may be the motive to another act. The affections, which, by some, are considered as volitions, may be the motives to purposes and executive volitions." pp. 56, 57.

The influence of external motives depends not merely upon the object which is contemplated, but upon "the correspondence between that and the state of the mind." The same object may excite very different feelings in different minds, and in the same mind at different times. A view of the character of God will awaken complacency in a holy mind, and enmity in an unholy mind. But "the same mind, or minds, in every respect alike, in precisely the same state, in the same circumstances, and under the same influence, will certainly choose in the same way."

To suppose that the mind may choose without motives, involves the absurdity of supposing that it may choose without having any thing to choose, or any reason why it does choose. But if the mind in every act of choice, is influenced by some motive, then volitions are not contingent but dependent. Whether we call motives causes, conditions or occasions of volition; they are antecedents on which volition depends, and without which it cannot exist. It is as impossible for the mind to choose without motives, as it is for a man to breathe without air, or to see without light. It has been

said, that since the power of choosing does not exist in the motives, it must exist exclusively in the mind, and consequently that the mind has power to choose even without motives. With the same truth it might be said, that since the power of breathing does not exist in the air, nor the power of seeing in the light, therefore man has power to breathe without air, and to see without light. If man has power to choose without motives, let us suppose him to exercise that power. What kind of choice would that be, in which nothing is chosen?

May not the mind control the motives by which it is influenced? In other words, may it not decide among different motives by which it will be governed? But by what motive is that act governed by which this decision is made? Is it prompted by some preceding motive, and is that selected by some preceding act, and so on, *ad infinitum*?

"The power of the mind over the objects which it contemplates, is not such that it can make them all agreeable, and in any degree, at its bidding." * * "May not our *volitions*, however, be in *opposition* to our feelings? We may undoubtedly, oppose *some* of our desires, for the sake of gratifying others. But what motive can a man have to will against *all* motives? Willing, at least, in the case of imperative acts, is determining to *do* something, and that for the sake of obtaining the objects of our desire. When such objects are before the mind, can we will to turn away from them, for the sake of something which is *not*, on any account, desired? If objects of desire have no *tendency* to move the will in a particular direction, they are not properly speaking, motives. If they *have* such a tendency, they must actually move the will, provided there is nothing which has a tendency to move it in a different direction. When on one side there is *no* influence, *any* influence on the opposite side must turn the scale. Whatever does not do this, has no influence in the case." pp. 63, 64.

From the foregoing extracts it will be seen that President Day has conclusively shown, that volitions are not self-determined, but are dependent on some influence out of the mind. If this is consistent with moral agency, as it must be if man is a moral agent, then, moral agency does not imply independence of divine control; for whatever be the influence under which the mind acts, that influence must be traced ultimately, to the will of the Creator. This conclusion is thus happily expressed by our author.

"If the volitions of accountable agents are dependent, for their nature on any thing preceding; if contingency does not come in, to break the chain of connection; then the Creator may have a determining influence over the volitions themselves, by the power which he possesses over the causes, conditions, occasions, and other antecedents on which choice depends. If the *natural constitution* of the agent has any concern, in deciding the character of his volitions, this constitution is moulded by the hand of God. If *external motives* have any sway over the will, these are presented under a superintending providence. If *internal perceptions and emotions* have any influence on volition, these are dependent on other antecedents which are under the regulation of divine power. By either leaving his creatures to themselves, to yield to their own propensities, and the various influences with which, in the natural course

of events, they are surrounded; or by the special interposition of his providence, whenever he sees fit, and by the agency of his spirit, he can exercise a controlling power over the acts of the will." p. 147.

In the section on liberty and necessity, the author shows, that the highest liberty of which man is capable, and of which it is possible to conceive, is perfectly consistent with that dependence of volitions on something preceding, for which he contends.

To the objections that this doctrine is contradicted by consciousness and common sense; that it makes man a machine, controlled by physical agency; that it represents man as passive; that it destroys accountability; that it exhibits God as the author of sin; and that it runs into fatalism and pantheism, President Day has made appropriate and forcible replies. Had we not already quoted so much, we should be glad to present our readers with copious extracts from this part of the work. As it is, we cannot refrain from inserting a short extract relating to each of these topics.

Consciousness. "A man is conscious that he wills or determines. But are we conscious that our volitions are dependent on nothing preceding? that motives from without have no influence, in determining our minds to choose as they do?" * * "Are we conscious that our affections and passions, however strong they may be, have no influence upon our purposes and executive volitions? Are we conscious, that neither external circumstances, nor the habitual character of our minds, have any concern in determining the nature of our emotions? Are we conscious that motives are mere *objects* of choice, to which we are perfectly indifferent, till we have made our election? Are we conscious that we are able to prefer chains and a dungeon, in themselves considered, to liberty and the light of heaven? Are we conscious of ever acting against all the motives which are before our minds, and that without any inducement to such a determination?" pp. 111, 112.

Accountability. "But what is necessary to render a man accountable for *acts of the will itself*? They must, unquestionably, be his *own* acts, and not those of another. But must he not also have power to *will the contrary*? Now what can this inquiry mean? Power over an action implies some antecedent or antecedents, on which the action depends. Volitions, if they depend upon any thing beside the agent himself, must depend on his feelings, his affections, his dispositions, his apprehensions. When it is affirmed, that an accountable agent must have power to will in opposite directions; are we to understand the meaning to be, that he has *equal* power to either side; or only that he has some power to the contrary? If the latter only be intended, there is no difficulty in seeing, that the *balance* of feeling may be so decisively on one side, as to control the man's volitions. Is it necessary to accountable agency, that the feelings for and against the decisions of the will, should be *equal*? Is the murderer free from guilt, unless he has as strong an inclination to spare his victim, as to take his life? Is the sinner excusable for his impenitence, unless he has an equal disposition to obey God, and to disobey him? Are the angels in heaven deserving of no praise for their constancy, unless they have an equal propensity to revolt?" pp. 115, 116.

Common sense. "Common sense teaches, that motives do not choose and act of themselves, without an agent; that they do not lie, or swear, or steal. But is it a doctrine of common sense, that the agent acts *without* motives; or that motives are merely *objects*, upon which volition, put forth fortuitously, may fasten; that they have no influence whatever upon his decision; that the sparkling bowl offers no allurement to the voluptuary; that to the thief, a

purse of guineas presents no temptation to steal; that external objects have no effect in moving the passions; or that the passions, when excited, have no tendency to give a direction to the will?" pp. 125, 126.

Mechanical and physical agency. "We sometimes hear it said, that if the will is directed by motives, it is not a self-moving power, it is a *mere machine*. It is easy to use words without meaning. What is a machine? It is commonly understood to be an instrument, composed entirely of *matter*, having certain *movements*, and set in operation by a *material force*. Has the will, or its acts, any of these properties? Is it a material substance? Has it any bodily motions? Is it impelled by a mechanical force? Does a machine, like the mind in willing, act from choice? Is it under the influence of rational motives? Is it moved by persuasion, by argument, by commands, by hope of reward, or fear of punishment?" * * * "Nearly allied to the objection, which represents dependent volition as being mechanical, is another, which considers such volition as being *physical agency*, rather than moral. The multifarious meanings of the term physical, renders it difficult to determine what is intended by this objection. It is one of those pliable words, which may be made to mean one thing or another, any thing or nothing, as occasion may require. Its proper signification is, *according to nature*. Is it claimed that nothing can be moral agency, but that which is *contrary* to nature, or which has no *connection* with nature?" * * * "Is it the *certain* connection between cause and effect, which is considered as inadmissible in the case of volition? Is it this that is called *physical* causation? And is it true, that certainty belongs only to the relations of the *material* world?" pp. 129—135.

Author of sin. "What is it to be the author of sin? According to the proper use of language, it is to *commit* sin. Will any one charge upon God, the sin which his creatures commit? He is the author of their being. He may be the author of the circumstances in which they are placed. But does this make him the author of their sin? If it does, how is the difficulty removed, by considering volitions as altogether contingent; by representing it to be the very nature of a moral agent, to be liable to sin by accident? Who gave to man this nature, from which contingent volitions proceed? Is God to be considered the author of sin, if he has either created *such agents* as would be liable to sin, or brought before his creatures, *such objects* as might influence them to sin?" pp. 149, 150.

Prevention of sin. "If the volitions of moral agents are under the control of the Creator, the inquiry may be made, why has he not wholly *prevented* the existence of sin? This difficulty does not press exclusively upon the opinion, that volitions are dependent upon something preceding, for being what they are. Let it be supposed that they are contingent. It is generally admitted, by those who believe that this is the case, that they are foreseen by God. Why, then, does he give existence to beings who he knows will sin; and that many of them will so sin, that it would have 'been good for them, if they had never been born?' Will it be said, that he could not avoid bringing them into being, *consistently with the best good of the universe*? And how do we know, even supposing that their volitions are under his control, that he could interpose to prevent all sin, *in a way* consistent with the best good of the universe? Do you say, that if he could not, it must be because he could not prevent all sin *without destroying moral agency*? Is the destroying of moral agency the *only* evil which could possibly result from deranging the plans of infinite wisdom and benevolence? If it be admitted, that all sin cannot be prevented, in the *best* moral system; does it follow, that it could not be prevented in *any* moral system?" pp. 151, 152.

Activity and dependence. "It has been said, that a man cannot be a free agent, if he is a mere passive recipient of influence from without. This is very true. If he is *merely* passive, he is no agent at all. If he is *merely* passive, he is not active, and therefore does not act. But what absurdity is there in suppo-

sing, that he may be active and passive too; active in willing, and passive in being caused to will? If a thing is caused to be active, does it follow, that it is *not* active; that it is merely passive? If a man is *made* willing to act in a certain way, does it prove that he is *not* willing? Is it urged, that to suppose a man to be caused to act freely, is inconsistent with the *definition* of free agency? Would it not be more to the purpose, to endeavor to render our definitions conformable to the reality of things; rather than to take it for granted, that facts correspond with our arbitrary definitions?" p. 164.

Fatalism. "An argument in favor of independent self-determination, is drawn, by some, from the consideration that it enables us to keep at a safe distance from the doctrine of *Fatalism*. This calling in the aid of an odious appellation, is a very convenient and summary mode of confuting an opponent. Whatever was meant by the fatalism of the ancients, it did *not* imply, that all the changes in the world are under the guidance of a *being of infinite wisdom, and infinite goodness*. This was so far from being the case, that the *gods themselves* were represented by the doctrine as being under the control of the fates." * * "Is there no way of escaping the odium of fatalism, but by adopting the fortuitous contingency of Epicurus? Is it fatalism to believe, that he who formed the soul of man, can so touch the springs of its action, as to influence the will, without interfering with the freedom of its choice? Is a chain of causes, suspended from the throne of nonentity, to be likened to the purposes and agency of the Omniscient Creator?" pp. 167 — 169.

We have given copious extracts, that we might not be accused of misrepresenting our author, and that our readers might have a fair opportunity of judging of the merits of the work.

President Day affirms in his introductory remarks, that "the self-determining power of the will, is a subject intimately connected with many of the theological discussions of the present day." To what discussions does he refer? What recent speculations does he suppose to be based on the theory which he has undertaken to refute? Who are their authors, and in what publications are they to be found? We know not that any theological disputant professes to adopt the theory in question. But that the great doctrine, which it was the object of President Day to vindicate, has been called in question, we have promised to show. We will now endeavor to redeem our promise. The doctrine is, that God can control, at pleasure, the moral actions of his accountable creatures. "If," says our author, "the volitions of accountable agents are dependent, for their nature, on any thing preceding; if contingency does not come in to break the chain of connection; the Creator may have a determining influence over the volitions themselves, by the power which he possesses over the causes, conditions, occasions, and other antecedents on which choice depends." But if God can control, at pleasure, the moral actions of his creatures, then certainly, if it had been his pleasure, he could have prevented sin, and secured universal holiness, in a moral system. This doctrine, we say, has been called in question. Now for the proof.

Dr. Taylor, in his *Concio ad Clerum*, preached in the Chapel of

Yale College, Sept. 10, 1828, in reply to the inquiry why God permitted man to sin, says,

"Do you know that God could have done better, better on the whole, or better, if he gave him existence at all, even for the individual himself? The error lies in the gratuitous assumption, that God could have adopted a moral system, and prevented all sin, or at least, the present degree of sin." p. 29.

He resumes the subject in a note, and says,

"Would not a moral universe of perfect holiness, and of course, of perfect happiness, be happier and better, than one comprising sin and its miseries? And must not infinite benevolence accomplish all the good it can? Would not a benevolent God, *had it been possible to him in the nature of things*, have secured the existence of universal holiness in his moral kingdom?" * * * "Who does most reverence to God, he who supposes that God *would* have prevented all sin in his moral universe, but *could* not; or he who affirms that he *could* have prevented it, but *would* not?" * * * "Is there then the least particle of evidence, that the entire prevention of sin in moral beings, is possible to God in the nature of things?" * * * "The assumption therefore, that God could, in a moral system, have prevented all sin, or the present degree of sin, is wholly gratuitous and unauthorized, and *ought never to be made the basis of an objection, or an argument.*" pp. 32, 33.

Is not this calling in question the doctrine of God's entire control over the moral universe? The view which is here taken of the government of God, has been strenuously maintained and defended in the pages of the Christian Spectator ever since the publication of the above mentioned sermon. It was the great point of controversy between Dr. Taylor and Dr. Woods. It was one of the points of controversy between Dr. Taylor and the writer of this article, in the Spirit of the Pilgrims. Enough has been written and published, on this subject, by the New Haven divines, to make a volume of no inconsiderable size. We shall be able to refer to only a few of their statements.

In their Review of Dr. Woods' Letters, Christian Spectator, Sept. 1830, they say, "what Dr. Taylor holds, is, that the nature of moral agency is such, that it may be true that God cannot prevent sin in all instances under a moral system." Dr. Woods had affirmed, what it is the great object of President Day's treatise to establish, that "God has a perfect unlimited power over all the springs and occasions of action in human beings,—over every thing which has the nature of a motive or excitement to action; and especially over the disposition of the heart." To this they reply, "This again is mere assertion." Dr. Woods had shown that Dr. Taylor's reasoning from the case of a father and his children was inconclusive, because God has a power over the hearts of men which parents have not over the hearts of their children. "*He hath mercy on whom he will have mercy.*" *The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water, he turneth it whithersoever he will.*" But the case of the father is different.

If he is affectionate and faithful, he does *every thing he can*, to make his children virtuous and happy." To this, they reply :

"A benevolent God does *not* do what he can, to make his creatures virtuous and happy ! We think this position might be left to answer for itself. But we would ask, if God can make all his accountable creatures perfectly holy, why he does not do it?" p. 559.

They say again,

"If holiness consists in voluntary action, then the fact that God secures it in moral agents for *a time*, is no proof that he can secure its continuance forever. 'The nature of free agency precludes such assertions respecting God, as truly as it does respecting an earthly parent.'" p. 561. They say also.

"The question is, what could God have done to secure more holiness and less sin in a moral system? This is the task, then, which devolves on Dr. Woods, viz: *to prove that God could have kept all sin, or the present degree of sin out of a universal moral system.* Now we say, that this is a task which Dr. Woods *cannot* accomplish; and for this very obvious reason, that the nature of the case absolutely precludes all proof, being one which may involve a palpable self-contradiction. It will not be denied that free moral agents *can* do wrong, under every possible influence to prevent it. The *possibility* of a contradiction in supposing them to be prevented from doing wrong, is therefore demonstrably certain. Free moral agents *can* do wrong, under all possible preventing influence. Using their powers as they *may* use them, they *will* sin; and no one can show that some such agents *will* not use their powers as they *may* use them. This possibility that free agents will sin, remains, (suppose what else you will,) so long as moral agency remains; and how can it be *proved* that a thing *will not* be, when for aught that appears, it *may be*?" pp. 562, 563.

We ask again, is not this calling in question the doctrine which it is the object of President Day's treatise to defend? The reasoning in the above extracts is all based on the assumption, that moral agents, so far as moral action is concerned, are independent:—that they not only have natural ability to do wrong, (in the sense in which Edwards uses that term) but that there can be no certainty, and consequently no proof that they will not do wrong, whatever God may do to prevent it. "The nature of the case," we are told, "absolutely precludes all proof." "Free moral agents can do wrong under all *possible* preventing influence. Using their powers as they may use them, they will sin; and no one can show that some such agents will not use their powers as they may use them." *Some* such agents! Why do they thus limit their conclusion? Their reasoning, if it proves any thing, proves that there can be no certainty that *all* moral agents will not sin. Who then can show that every saint and every angel will not yet apostatize? They are free moral agents. "Using their powers as they may use them, they will sin; and who can prove that a thing will not be, when for aught that appears, it may be?" Who then can prove that all

the subjects of God's moral kingdom will not yet raise the standard of revolt? It is no more true of some moral agents that they can do wrong under all possible preventing influence, than it is of all moral agents; and if this fact of itself precludes all possibility of proof that some such agents will not sin, it equally precludes the possibility of proof that all such agents will not sin. "This possibility that free agents will sin, remains, (suppose what else you will.)" No matter how conclusively it may be demonstrated, that volitions are dependent upon some influence out of the mind, and that this influence must be ultimately under the control of God. No matter how full and how explicit may be the testimony of the Scriptures, that God has complete dominion over the hearts of his creatures; it must all pass for nothing. It cannot be admitted as proof, because "the nature of the case absolutely precludes all proof." To suppose God able to control the conduct of moral agents, may involve a contradiction. This, we are told, is demonstrably certain. We should like, however, to see the demonstration, before we yield our assent.

Suppose moral agents have power, that is, natural ability to sin under all circumstances; but natural ability is not inconsistent with moral necessity. Cannot God render it certain that moral agents will not do what they have natural ability to do? Can he not prevent sin, without destroying the power to sin? Most certainly he can, if he can control the moral causes on which volitions depend. And if he does possess this power, is it demonstrably certain that there can be no proof of the fact? The hinge on which the whole dispute turns, is the very question discussed by President Day. Are volitions dependent, or contingent? Is there any cause or reason why free agents choose, as they do, except the fact, that they do thus choose?

In the same article from which the above extracts are taken, we find the following declaration:

"That moral agents *as such*—moral agents in their very nature as moral agents, should be *entirely* dependent on some *ab extra* agency for right and wrong moral action, is another solecism. To say that it must be so in the nature of things, is to say that *God* is not a free moral agent, and that he has not made, and cannot make, creatures in his own image. All moral exercise or action, is voluntary action, and all voluntary action implies power in the agent to the opposite voluntary action." p. 565.

By "*ab extra* agency," they mean all efficacious influence from without the mind, which is, in any way, under the control of God; and they seem to suppose that created moral agents are as independent of God for their voluntary actions, as God is independent of any other being. On any other supposition,

it is impossible to understand their illustration. But are not moral agents dependent on an extra influence? Does the mind ever choose without motives? that is, without having any thing to choose, or any reason why it does choose? Can there be any such thing as choice in which nothing is chosen? But if the mind cannot choose without motives; and if the will is always determined by the strongest motive, as President Day, and President Edwards have both demonstrated, then a moral agent is dependent on an extra influence for right and wrong moral action. The reasons why he chooses one thing rather than another, must be traced back to something out of the mind. It is true that executive volitions are determined by purposes, and purposes by emotions or affections; but the affections are excited by external motives; and "these are presented under a superintending providence." Thus we see that all choice depends ultimately on an extra influence. There is no way to avoid this conclusion, but to plunge into all the absurdities of the self-determining power of the will.

It is a favorite position of the New Haven divines, and one which they have often repeated and vindicated, that "God prefers, *all things considered*, holiness to sin in all instances in which the latter takes place." Why, then, we ask, does he suffer sin to exist? Why does he not prevent sin, by securing holiness in its stead, in all instances? The only answer which can be given to this question, is, that he is not able to do it. Most certainly he must be disposed to secure, what he, *on the whole*, prefers. Accordingly they say, "God not only prefers, on the whole, that his creatures should forever perform their duties rather than neglect them, but purposes on his part, to do ALL IN HIS POWER to promote this very object in his kingdom." Ch. Spec. 1832, p. 660. If this be so, then certainly God has not complete control over the hearts of his creatures. It cannot be true that *the king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water*; and that *he turneth it whithersoever he will*: for no king, nor any other human being has ever lived, who has not failed to perform his duties. It cannot be true that *he hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth*: for he would have mercy on all, if he could; and so far from hardening whom he will, it is not his will that any should be hardened; but he prefers, on the whole, that the hearts of all should be softened, and he "purposes to do ALL IN HIS POWER to promote this very object in his kingdom." If "God prefers, *all things considered*, holiness to sin, in *all instances*," then not a single sin has ever been committed which God could have prevented, by securing holiness in its stead.

In every instance of transgression, man has been too strong for his Maker. His free-agency has triumphed over the utmost skill and power of Jehovah to restrain and control it. If this is not maintaining the self-determining power of the will in its fullest extent, we know not when, or by whom it was ever maintained.

We are aware, however, that the New Haven divines have elsewhere admitted, though, as we think, very inconsistently, that God might have secured obedience in particular instances in which he has not secured it. But they contend, that had he done so, it might have resulted in a vast increase of sin on the whole. Thus Dr. Taylor says in the note to his *Concio ad Clerum*.

“Had he prevented the sins of one human being to the present time, or had he brought to repentance one sinner more than he has, who can prove that the requisite interposition for the purpose, would not result in a vast increase of sin in the system, including even the apostacy and augmented guilt of that individual?”

We have a remark or two to make in reference to this theory.

1. It is, as we have seen, altogether inconsistent with their favorite position. If in any instance in which sin exists, God could, by any interposition, have secured holiness in its stead; then, in *that* instance, he did not prefer, *all things considered*, holiness to sin; for there was one consideration which induced him to prefer sin to holiness in that instance, viz., rather than exert the requisite interposition, he preferred that the sin should exist instead of the holiness which he might have secured. Consequently, he does not prefer, *all things considered*, holiness to sin in all instances. There are instances, in which he permits acts of disobedience, when he might have secured obedience; and if he does so, he doubtless, on the whole, prefers to do so. They must, therefore, give up this theory, or abandon their favorite position.

But 2. What reason can there be to suppose that the prevention of sin in one part of the system, will tend to promote its prevalence in another part? Do these divines suppose, that the empire of Jehovah is too vast for him to manage?—that he cannot watch over every part of it at the same time?—that in order to secure allegiance in one part of his dominions, he must necessarily leave other parts unprotected, and exposed to such fatal influences as will ensure revolt? Is such the character of the Almighty, Omniscient, and Omnipresent God?

But 3. What conceivable tendency has the prevention of sin, to promote the prevalence of sin? Suppose the angels who fell,

had been confirmed in a state of holiness; would their persevering and cheerful obedience, have been likely to excite discontent and insurrection among their associates? Suppose our first parents had been prevented from sinning; would this have had any tendency to fill our world with rebellion, or to excite rebellion in any other world? But Dr. Taylor says,

"Facts, so far as they are known to us, furnish no support to the assumption, that God could in a moral system prevent all sin, or even the present degree of sin. For we know of no creatures of God, whose holiness is secured without that influence which results either directly or indirectly from the existence of sin and its punishment. How then can it be shown *from facts*, that God could secure any of his moral creatures in holiness, without this influence; or to what purpose is it to allege instances of the prevention of sin *under* this influence, to prove that God could prevent it without this influence? Rather, do not all known facts furnish a strong presumption to the contrary? If God could prevent all sin without this influence, why has he not done it?" *Concio ad Clerum*, p. 33.

And is there no influence which God can exert upon the minds of perfectly holy beings, of sufficient power to preserve them in a state of holiness, without the aid of sin and its punishment? Are they so inclined to evil, that they all would rebel, if they could do it with impunity? Is it slavish fear which binds them to the eternal throne? And even if the fear of punishment were indispensable to secure their allegiance, could not God inspire them with that fear without placing before them examples of sin and punishment? Could not holy beings in any way be made to believe divine threatenings till they had seen them executed? Is it characteristic of perfectly holy beings, that they have little confidence in their Maker's word? Are the sin and punishment of a part of God's accountable creatures, indispensable as the means of securing any holiness in a moral system? And is sin, indeed, such "a necessary means of the greatest good?"

That God ever prefers sin to holiness, on its own account, no one pretends. But that he does permit it to exist, when he might have secured holiness in its stead, all must admit, who believe that he has complete dominion over the hearts of his creatures. This does not imply that he views sin with complacency, or takes any pleasure in it, in *itself considered*. A thing may be, in *itself considered*, very displeasing to God, when, *all things considered*, it may be his pleasure that it should exist. For example:—*In itself considered*, God has no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but, *all things considered*, it is his pleasure that the wicked should die; otherwise, he will act contrary to his pleasure, when he shall doom them to the miseries of the second death. *In itself considered*, God had no pleasure in the

sufferings of his Son; but, *all things considered*, it was his pleasure that his Son should suffer; for *it pleased the Lord to bruise him*. *In itself considered*, God has no pleasure in the afflictions of his people; for *he doth not afflict willingly*; but, *all things considered*, it is his pleasure to afflict them; for *whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth*. This distinction is very important, and without keeping it in view, it is impossible to reconcile different parts of the scriptures with each other, and the perfections of God with facts. It is therefore no contradiction to say, that although God does not prefer sin to holiness, in any instance, for its own sake, yet he does prefer, *all things considered*, that it should exist, to some extent, instead of holiness, in his kingdom. This we must admit, or be driven to the conclusion, that it is beyond the power of God to prevent a single sin which ever has been committed, or which ever will be committed, by securing holiness in its stead. We might quote largely on this subject from the writings of the New Haven divines; but we will add but one extract more, and this for the purpose of showing the great importance which they attach to their theory, by representing the opposite theory as leading by legitimate consequence, to the most destructive errors.

"This theory, if carried out into its legitimate consequences, leads to universalism, to infidelity, and to atheism. Dr. Tyler maintains, that God really prefers the holiness and happiness of all his moral creatures to their sin and perdition. But Dr. Tyler also maintains, that God can execute this preference, i. e. *can* secure the holiness and happiness of all his moral creatures. It follows therefore, that God will secure the holiness and happiness of all his moral creatures. Of course, all men will be saved. But this is not all. According to this scheme, the divine authority of the Bible is subverted. This book confessedly abounds in the most unqualified declarations of the future endless misery of multitudes of the human race. But how can a book, which so explicitly contradicts demonstrable, known truth, be divine? Especially how can a book, pretend to claim an Omnipotent and a benevolent God for its author, while it exhibits him as creating myriads of beings, because he prefers, on the whole, their sin and everlasting misery, to their perfect holiness and happiness? As an Omnipotent Being, he can, according to Dr. Tyler, prevent such a result. As a benevolent Being, he must be disposed to prevent it. But, according to Dr. Tyler, the Scriptures clearly teach, that God will not secure the perfect holiness and happiness of his moral creation, when he can secure it. How then can a book, which belies every essential attribute of a perfect God, pretend to claim his authority? Apply, now, the principles of Dr. Tyler in another form, and atheism is the consequence. Dr. Tyler will admit, that God is disposed to prevent all evil, in itself considered, throughout his creation; and that this disposition is as real a preference of the Divine Being, as any other. But Dr. Tyler maintains also, that God *can* prevent all evil throughout his creation. The argument then for atheism furnished by this theory, may be thus stated:—If there were a God, that is, a being of infinite power and goodness, he could prevent, and would be disposed, and therefore would in fact, prevent all evil throughout his creation. But evil exists. Therefore, there is *not* a being of infinite power and goodness—there is no God." "We admit the fact that the foregoing

reasoning is that of the universalist, the infidel, and the atheist. But we ask, who furnishes and sustains the premises? And what conclusions, when the premises are admitted, are more unanswerable?" "We cannot but say, what we believe in the integrity of our heart, that supralapsarian Calvinists furnish the grand principle on which these conclusions rest; and combining their powers of argument in its defence, with all their means of influencing the faith of others, give to it and the conclusions founded on it, a delusive and fearful infallibility in the minds of thousands. The principle is, *that an Omnipotent God, by the mere dint of power, can secure the universal holiness and happiness of his moral creatures.*" "We cannot but say, that in our honest belief, the advocates of this principle, greatly, but inconsiderately, contribute to the support of the MOST DESTRUCTIVE ERRORS." "Sure we are, that a very limited acquaintance with facts, would show that the principle advocated by Dr. Tyler and others, is the very same, which, in the hands of Voltaire and other enemies of the gospel, has spread infidelity and atheism to such a fearful extent throughout Europe, and is, in fact, the basis of all that latitudinarianism, which rejects Christianity, and calmly reposes on false and undefined notions of the goodness and power of God." Ch. Spec. 1832. pp. 481—483.

According to these statements, those who hold, with President Day, that God possesses unlimited control over the moral actions of his creatures, have no alternative left them, but to become universalists, or give up the Bible, and take refuge in atheism. They furnish the premises on which the universalist, the infidel, and the atheist, have constructed unanswerable arguments in favor of their respective systems. We are, of course, to believe, that those divines who admit this doctrine, have never yet fairly met the objections of these enemies of the truth. The work of Edwards against Chauncey, and Strong's Benevolence and Misery, which have heretofore been considered triumphant refutations of the system of universalism, are to be set down as utter failures. And not only so, but the great body of calvinistic divines, have been co-workers with Voltaire, and other enemies of the gospel, in spreading infidelity and atheism to such a fearful extent throughout Europe. With these divines is now to be classed, the venerable President of Yale College, together with his illustrious predecessor!

We have been led more particularly to compare the views maintained by President Day in the treatise before us, with the writings of the New Haven divines, on account of the notice which they have taken of the work, in a recent number of the Christian Spectator. Strange as it may seem, they speak of it in terms of high commendation, and hail it as "a valuable auxiliary in the defence of important truth." They go so far as to say, that they cannot find a syllable in it which militates against the real sentiments of Dr. Taylor. And what do they mean by this? Do they mean that they are now convinced that the theory which Dr. Taylor has propounded, and labored so

hard to defend, and to the defence of which, so large a portion of their periodical has been devoted for the last ten years, is unfounded? Are they disposed to retract, and to caution their readers against being misled by their past speculations on this subject? If this were the case, it would give us unfeigned joy. But nothing like this is intimated. On the contrary, the whole strain of their remarks, seems intended to make the impression that the views of President Day, are the very views which they have uniformly maintained. This representation would have filled us with unmingled astonishment, if we had witnessed nothing of the kind before. But we have not forgotten who it was, that once charged an opponent with maintaining theories which lead to the "worst of heresies,"—even "universalism, infidelity and atheism,"—theories that involve the positions that "God is the responsible author of sin,"—that "sin is a good thing—good in its nature and tendency,"—that "God is a criminal tempter,"—that "the divine lawgiver is a deceiver," and other consequences equally shocking and blasphemous; and afterwards, without retracting a syllable which he had written, or attempting to show that his opponent had retracted any thing, turned around and said, "we are perfectly agreed." We have not forgotten the Review of Bellamy's treatise on the Wisdom of God in the permission of sin, in which an attempt was made to fasten upon that distinguished theologian the very sentiments which it was his object to refute. We have not forgotten the use which has been made of the names of Edwards, Dwight, and Strong, to say nothing of living men. But we will let this pass, and leave the reviewers to account for the above representation in their own way. Of one thing we are certain, that the great mass of readers have understood them to maintain views utterly irreconcilable with those inculcated in the treatise of President Day. If it is not his object to defend the doctrine of God's entire control over the moral actions of his creatures; and if it has not been their object to call this doctrine in question, we certainly have not understood either him or them. And we despair, moreover, of ever ascertaining the opinions of any man, from his own written statements. If they are convinced of their error, let them like honest men and christians, publish their retractions. But what they have written, they have written. And so long as it is permitted to stand unretracted, we are compelled to believe that it expresses their present real sentiments.

"But President Day," they tell us, "does not reason on the theory that sin is the necessary means of the greatest good,

or that the present system of the universe was chosen for the sake of the sin which it contains." And who ever did reason on this theory? What theologian ever maintained that "the present system of the universe was chosen for the sake of the sin which it contains?" Or that "sin is the necessary means of the greatest good," in the sense in which they have interpreted this language? What is the theory that sin is the necessary means of the greatest good? They tell us that "it is equivalent to saying that sin is a good thing—even the best thing," and that "when men sin, they do the very best thing they can do." They tell us, moreover, that to maintain that God overrules sin for good, by counteracting its tendencies, is directly to contradict this theory. We ask then again, who ever maintained this theory? We wish here to make a few remarks, for the purpose of exposing the injustice which has been done to the great body of Calvinistic divines.

The position that "sin is the necessary means of the greatest good," so far as we know, was first brought into use by the New Haven divines themselves. Dr. Taylor, in the note to his *Concio ad Clerum*, said that it is a common assumption that sin is the necessary means of the greatest good. The language was not quoted, nor have we been able to find it in the writings of any of our standard divines. It was language which he employed to characterize the commonly received opinion in relation to the divine permission of sin. In the controversy which followed, some of his opponents vindicated this position, supposing that he meant by it what they knew to be the commonly received opinion on the subject, viz., that God will overrule all the sin which exists, and so counteract its tendencies as to bring to pass a greater amount of good than if sin had not existed. They were careful to explain the sense in which they vindicated it. They stated explicitly, that sin in its own nature, is evil, and infinitely hateful to God, that its tendency is to evil, and evil only; and that it is never made the means or occasion of good, except by being overruled and counteracted in its tendencies.

But Dr. Taylor subsequently insisted, that the position means, that "sin is a good thing—good in its nature and tendency," and that "when men sin they do the best thing they can do;" and he made his opponents responsible for it in this odious sense, because they had vindicated it in an entirely different sense; and from that time to this, the *Christian Spectator* has been constantly ringing changes upon this phraseology, and the great body of Calvinistic divines are represented as maintain-

ing the theory in the sense which they have attached to it; when they know, that so far from maintaining it, they reject it with abhorrence. Now we appeal to every unprejudiced reader, whether this is not a most unjust and slanderous imputation.

Let it be remembered, whence this position originated. Let it also be remembered that those who vindicated it in the sense in which they supposed it was intended to be understood, were not pleased with the language. It was language which they would not have chosen to express their own views, or the commonly received views on the subject. The writer of this article, in his controversy with Dr. Taylor, said expressly, "It is not a position of my coining, nor one which I ever should have coined. I have no wish to vindicate this particular phraseology. I never considered it a happy mode of expression. It is the language which Dr. Taylor has chosen to exhibit the views of his brethren."

The question is not whether this position means what they say it means. If it does, then by saying that it is "a common assumption," they have grossly misrepresented the views of their brethren, and they are bound to make a full and frank retraction of their statements. They have openly, and before the world, charged their brethren with holding what they say is equivalent to the declaration that "sin is a good thing," and that "when men sin, they do the best thing they can do;" when they know that such a sentiment could not be maintained without the most heaven-daring impiety. And they persist in doing it. Scarcely a number of their periodical issues from the press, in which this subject is not brought into view.

"But President Day does not reason on the theory that sin is the necessary means of the greatest good." Very true. And who ever did, if the theory be what they say it is? But is any thing which President Day has said, inconsistent with the commonly received views on this subject? That God could have prevented all sin in a moral system, he not only admits, but has conclusively shown. And why does he suppose that God permitted sin to exist? Because it could not be excluded from the *best moral system*; in other words, because the system is better as it is, than it would have been if sin had been entirely excluded. He maintains that God will secure the greatest possible amount of good. But he does not suppose that sin is good, or that it tends to good. On the contrary, he supposes that its tendencies are all evil. And who ever denied this?—Who ever maintained that sin is the *direct* means of good, or that "the present system was chosen for the sake of the sin

which it contains?" But does President Day deny that God can overrule sin for good—that he can counteract its tendencies, and thus not only prevent the evil to which it tends, but take occasion from its existence, to make displays of his character, which he could not make, if sin did not exist; and in this way, secure an amount of good, which otherwise would not be realized? He maintains that the present system is the best possible system; and at the same time maintains that God might have had a moral system, from which sin should be entirely excluded. He consequently maintains that God had wise and benevolent ends to answer by the permission of sin. He permitted it to exist, not because he could not prevent it in a moral system, but because he saw that he could accomplish a greater good by permitting it, than by preventing it. This is all, for which Calvinists generally have contended. If then it is "a common assumption, that sin is the necessary means of the greatest good," we fear that President Day will hardly escape the imputation, his explicit declaration to the contrary notwithstanding. The real point of dispute on this subject, relates to the power of God over the hearts of moral agents. Are they completely under his control? If they are, the theory of the New Haven divines cannot stand. What President Day's views are in relation to this point, we have already seen. To establish the affirmative of this question, is the great object for which he has written his book.

There is another topic touched upon by these reviewers, on which we wish to make a few remarks. After referring to President Day's classification of the acts of the will into emotions, purposes, and executive volitions, they say,

"Our readers are already familiar with this classification, which has been used in our discussions for many years. They are probably aware, too, that we have suffered some reproach on this account. We have spoken of the controlling disposition of unrenewed men, as a *generic volition*, or *governing purpose* of the soul; and of the change in regeneration, as a permanent change in this purpose, (i. e. disposition) produced by the special influence of the Holy Spirit; and for so doing, we have been stigmatized as heretics. We shall hope, under the shelter of President Day's authority, to escape any further reproach for the use of these terms." p. 176.

Unpleasant as it may be to dislodge these reviewers from so comfortable a shelter, a regard to truth obliges us to do it. Whether this classification of the acts of the will, is one which they have been in the habit of making, we shall not stop now to inquire. All that we have to say on this point, is, that we do not recollect to have seen it in their writings. Be this, however, as it may, we are very confident that their views of

regeneration will not at all comport with the principles laid down and established by President Day. Does he believe that the change in regeneration has its seat in the governing purpose of the soul, or in the affections which lie back of this purpose, and which decide its character? According to him, the purposes of the mind depend on the emotions or affections. When a man resolves on a course of conduct, it is to gratify some feeling or desire of the mind. This constitutes the internal motive of the choice, and decides its character. The purpose is right or wrong, sinful or holy, according to the internal motive which prompts it. It is with purposes, as with external actions; they derive their character solely from the motives from which they flow. For not only the same external actions, but the same purposes, may flow from very different motives. For example:—Suppose that a man lives a strictly religious life, so far as outward conduct is concerned. This he may do, either because he loves God, and delights in his service, or solely for the sake of obtaining everlasting happiness. If the former be his motive, he is a saint; if the latter, he is a pharisee. The character of his conduct depends entirely on the character of the internal motive by which he is influenced. Just so with a governing purpose of the mind. A man *resolves* to live a strictly religious life. This he may do from either of the motives above specified; and his purpose will, of course, be right or wrong, according to the motive. This, if we understand him, is President Day's view of the matter. According to him, then, the seat of moral action is in the affections. It is of these, that right and wrong are ultimately predicated. What, then, is the change in regeneration? Most evidently, if it is a change of moral character, it is a change of the affections;—not merely a change of the governing purpose of the mind, but a change of the internal motive which prompts the purpose, and decides its character. To illustrate the point:—Suppose a man has, for a course of years, been devoted to the pursuit of worldly good. The motive by which he has been prompted, is the desire of securing his own happiness. But he becomes convinced that this course of conduct will lead to interminable misery, and that the only way to obtain true and lasting happiness, is, to devote himself to the service of God. Accordingly, he resolves to change his course, and to become strictly a religious man;—all, let it be remembered, for the sake of securing his own personal happiness. Here is a change of the governing purpose of the mind, but there is no change of motive. His purpose to serve God, is prompted by precisely the same

internal motive, as his previous purpose to serve the world. Is this regeneration? That it is often mistaken for regeneration, we cannot doubt. Indeed, we are persuaded that this is the way in which spurious conversions usually take place. Hundreds and thousands, we fear, have thus mistaken a change of purpose, without any change of motive, for a change of heart, and have rested on a hope which will make ashamed when God takes away the soul.

But do the writings of the New Haven divines give countenance to any such view of regeneration? Let the reader carefully examine the following passage, and judge for himself.

"There is no more difficulty in accounting for the fact, that the yielding sinner supremely loves God, from the impulse of a regard to his own happiness, than there is in explaining the opposite fact, of his having formerly, under the influence of the same principle, when perverted, supremely loved idols; which, though contrary to his reason and conscience, his heart wickedly preferred as his highest good. The self-love that was previously in servitude to his selfish inclinations, and perverted by their unhallowed influence, now breaks away from that servitude, as his soul, under the power of light and motives rendered effectual by the Holy Ghost, is made to see and feel where its true interest lies. And no sooner is this duty seen and felt, through the influence of the spirit, than the man who is so constituted that he must have a regard to what he views as his own highest good, at once chooses Christ and his service as the means of securing it." *Ch. Spec.* 1833. pp. 357, 358.

We might quote many passages which contain substantially the same views. And what is the import of this language? Is it not most clearly, that regeneration implies no change in the internal motive by which man is influenced?—that the yielding sinner acts "under the influence of the same principle" as that by which he was influenced when he served his idols? This we have long regarded as one of the most dangerous errors of the New Haven system. We cannot refrain from expressing our solemn conviction, that those who have experienced no other regeneration than that which accords with the above representation, have never been renewed by the Spirit of God.

But important as this topic is, we cannot dwell longer on it at present. We will only add, that nothing which President Day has written, can possibly be so construed as to favor these views, without grossly perverting his language.

In conclusion we would say, that we regard the treatise before us, as eminently calculated to do good, at the present day. We hope it will be extensively circulated and read. We could wish it might find a place in the library of every minister in our country; and especially, that it might be carefully studied by every theological student. President Day has rendered an im-

portant service to the Church; and our prayer is, that he may live to see much fruit of his labor.

To the wish expressed by the conductors of the *Christian Spectator*, that the work of President Day "may prove a common ground on which brethren who have differed, may meet in peace," we respond our hearty Amen. It is the very ground on which we have longed wished for union. It is the very ground on which the ministers of New England were so long, and so happily united, till their ranks were broken by the recent speculations, and boasted theological improvements. If those who have caused the division, are now disposed to heal the breach, by returning to the ground from which they have departed, their course is plain. Let them evince their sincerity, by frankly and openly renouncing their favorite theories, and doing what they can to counteract their dangerous influence upon the public mind. When they shall do this, they will find no obstacles on the part of their brethren to a cordial and happy union. But with what consistency, or sincerity, can they propose to meet on the ground above specified, so long as all which they have written and published, stands unretracted, to influence the faith of the present, and future generations?



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